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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001766

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SUBJECT: ZANU-PF DECLARED WINNER OF KADOMA MAYORAL ELECTION

Classified by Chief of Pol Section Matt Harrington.

Reasons: 1.5 (B) and (D).

11. (c) Summary: ZANU-PF was declared the winner of the July 27-28 Kadoma mayoral election by a slim margin. The pre-election period was marred by incidents of sporadic violence and the mass arrest of prominent Kadoma MDC members two days before the vote. On the voting days themselves independent local observers noted that substantial numbers of individuals from outside of Kadoma were bused into the area and that many of them joined the lines of voters at polling stations. MDC officials suspect that these individuals were allowed to vote even though their names did not appear on the official voters roll, and the officials criticized the use of supplementary rolls which were not made available for public scrutiny. There were sufficient incidents of irregularities to cast doubt on whether this outcome genuinely reflected the will of Kadoma's residents. The MDC has publicly denounced the results of the election. End Summary

ZANU-PF WINS

12. (c) Zanu-PF won the Kadoma mayoral election by a slim margin. ZANU-PF candidate Fani Phiri polled 6,886 votes compared to 6,214 votes for MDC candidate Editor Matamisa. MDC Secretary-General, Welshman Ncube publicly declared the

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results fraudulent because of what he described as widescale irregularities on both polling days. This was the first time the MDC has lost a mayoral election in the six races it has fielded candidates, beginning in May 2001.

PRE-ELECTION VIOLENCE

13. (c) On July 29, poloff spoke separately with representatives from the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and Silas Matamisa, Chairman of the MDC,s Mashonaland West chapter, about the Kadoma election. Matamisa noted that there was sporadic violence in Kadoma in the run-up to the election. On June 25, suspected ZANU-PF supporters firebombed the residence of initial MDC mayoral candidate Daniel Mugomba. On July 22, MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai was forced to cancel his appearance at a rally for Editor Matamisa in Kadoma when ZANU-PF supporters took over the rally site and assaulted several MDC members. In the week preceding the polling, police arrested Kadoma MP Austin Mapandawana and ten other MDC members at an election rally that turned violent when ZANU-PF youth attempted to forcibly disperse the gathering. Mapandawana and the other MDC members remained in police custody until the Friday before the election. Matamisa commented that the detentions and incidents of pre-election violence were aimed at disrupting the MDC,s ability to successfully mount an election campaign, and discouraging potential MDC voters from participating in the voting.

TURN-OUT

14. (c) Out of 38,739 registered voters, 13,161 cast ballots in the election, which represents 33.9% of eligible voters. This compares to the 45.3% of registered voters who voted in the 2000 parliamentary election in Kadoma, which the MDC won by 12,049 votes to 5,666. ZESN National Chairman, Reginald Matchaba Hove, speculated that the relatively low turn-out could be attributed to the episodes of pre-election violence and intimidation. The turn-out in Kadoma was slightly higher, however, than voter participation in other mayoral elections in the past two years. In the 2001 Bulawayo mayoral race, for example, only 20% of voters participated, while in the mayoral elections in Masvingo and Chegutu, between 27% and 28% of registered voters cast ballots. The 38,739 voters on the roll in the municipality of Kadoma is remarkably close to the 40,882 voters on the roll for the much larger district of Kadoma Central in the 2002 presidential election, raising suspicions about possible

inflation of the numbers.

15. (c) While both Matamisa and the ZESN observers agreed that the turn-out was heaviest on Saturday, the first day of polling, there were voting irregularities on both polling days that might well have inflated the number of registered voters that took part in the election. ZESN observer Prisca Mukwengi noted that on both days people from as far away as Chinhoyi (165km) and Sanyati (80km) were bussed into the area. When ZESN observers questioned these individuals about what they were doing in the area, they replied that they were going shopping<sup>8</sup>. The observers later saw many of these individuals blending into the lines outside of the polling stations. Matamisa noted that on the polling days some ZANU-PF supporters were seen with supplementary voters roll, that had not been made available to his party or the general public. He surmised that non-Kadoma residents were able to successfully cast ballots because their names appeared on these unofficial<sup>8</sup> rolls.

#### KADOMA RESIDENTS TURNED AWAY

16. (c) There were reports of individuals being turned away from polling stations during the elections. The ZESN observers confirmed that a relatively small number of individuals were denied the opportunity to vote, but, at present, they could not give exact figures. Mukwengi and Chiseya noted that most individuals were turned away because they either could not produce proper identification or they were not on the official voters roll.

#### COMMENT

17. (c) ZANU-PF ran a vintage campaign in Kadoma. While the relative lack of violence on the polling days was positive, there are many troubling aspects of the election. The arrest of Mapandawana and other prominent opposition members in advance of the election was a clear attempt by the ruling party to hamper the MDC's ability to successfully mobilize the vote. In addition, the presence of significant numbers of non-residents at polling stations, and the allegations of supplementary voter rolls, along with the pre-election incidents of violence, raises doubts that the election results genuinely reflected the will of Kadoma's residents. These irregularities also belie ZANU-PF's claims that the Kadoma victory marks a fundamental shift in its fortunes in urban areas. ZANU-PF may have been declared the winner, but true to form, they muddied the waters to the extent that the legitimacy of the outcome remains in doubt.

SULLIVAN